

Spectrum



Capt. Eric Wilson and Larry Walton of Signal Captains Career Course Class 02-08 assist spectators at the Special Olympics March 26 at Barton Field.



(Above) Service members from Fort Gordon assist special Olympians during the opening ceremony parade as they march onto Barton Field for the Area 9 Regional Special Olympics. (Right) Jennie Montgomery and Brad Means from WJBF Channel 6 serve as masters of the ceremony. (Below) The ceremonial flame is lit starting the Olympic games.



Photo by Dayneshia Bryant



Fort Gordon makes Olympics special

Capt. Michael Greenberger
442nd Signal Battalion

Volunteers from all over Fort Gordon pitched in and assisted the Special Olympics held here March 26.

“We couldn’t put these games on in this area if it wasn’t for Fort Gordon and these volunteers,” said Arthur Dickerson, Special Olympics volunteer coordinator. “Fort Gordon has been a huge asset to the Special Olympics.”

Service members from all branches were represented on Barton Field. Service members from the Navy, Air Force and Army helped conduct several of the Special Olympic events. Among other things, volunteers timed runners, raked and measured the long jump, and lined the tracks and events shouting and encouraging the special athletes.

“Everyone out here is a winner,” said Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Foley, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon commanding general, as he opened the games in a short ceremony. “I’d also like to give a special thanks to all the volunteers out here today.”

One group of volunteers from the Signal Captains Career Course Class 02-08 really made an impact on the event when the buses dropping off spectators and athletes

seemed to be moving a little slow. The Army captains jumped right in and sorted the issue out, forming the buses into two lines and facilitating their passenger offload by helping disabled and wheelchair-bound people to their designated gathering points. With their assistance, nearly all the athletes and spectators were in place for the opening parade of athletes, which was led by Fort Gordon’s own color guard.

“These volunteers have been doing an excellent job,” said Dickerson. “We have even more volunteers than we did last year.” Dickerson estimated the number of volunteers to be about 300.

“I just can’t say enough good things about the crew of volunteers we have out here,” said Neil Smith. Smith is a sports coordinator for intramural sports with the outdoor recreation division at the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation

“We’ve seen a tremendous coming together of all the organizations here on Fort Gordon,” said Smith. “The ease of which everyone came out and rallied for this event and the support they’re providing is just tremendous.”

“The interaction between Soldiers and the athletes is great too,” Dickerson said. “They look forward to it all year.”

According to Dickerson, the games held at Fort Gordon are the largest held in Georgia. “A lot of areas use students as volunteers – we use Soldiers,” said Dickerson. “You can see a huge difference in the volunteers. The students show up and leave after a little while, but the Soldiers stick it out and stay until the end.”

The same sentiment was echoed by Special Olympics coordinators all over the field.

“These volunteers are invaluable,” said Karen Butler, Special Olympics coordinator. “Without these great people we just couldn’t have pulled this off.”



Photos by Marlene Thompson

(Left) Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Foley, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon commanding general hugs and congratulates a special Olympian after opening the games with a rousing speech reminding the crowd that all the athletes are winners. (Below) An athlete leaps in the air in the long jump event during the Special Olympics on Barton Field March 26.



(Above) A special Olympian and his teacher enjoy the opening ceremony events that included lighting the ceremonial flame and releasing hundreds of colored balloons.



Photo by Capt. Michael Greenberger



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(Above) An athlete takes his best shot in the long jump event during the Special Olympics on Barton Field March 26. (Left) A group of athletes celebrate their wins along with their support staff members.